Education Language Arts

Kindergarten: Module 4: Unit 2

Overview for Families

Notes to Teacher:

Making connections between home and school is vitally important in supporting students' learning. The following suggestions and materials represent some of the ways you can support these connections during this unit.

Suggestions:

- Copy the attached family letter and send it home with students after teaching Lesson 1 (this letter can be used as is or as a model). Consider having the letter translated for families whose first language is not English.
- Consider sending an additional letter to parents and school community members reminding them to join the class for a celebration of learning about trees at the end of Unit 3.
- Encourage students to share any at-home learning with the class. They can do this orally or by sharing writing, pictures, or artifacts. Example: Consider providing time for students to share the places they see trees in their community. Students can document with a camera or draw pictures (Emphasize that this should be done with an adult family member to ensure student safety).
- Create a display board featuring the different places students have observed trees in their communities. Encourage them to explain the reasons that those places are nice or useful for trees. Provide labels for each place and reason written in several different languages.
- Take pictures of students learning about the places and reasons people plant trees and post them in the room or hallway.
- Depending on the needs of your students and the expectations of your school community, consider assigning additional homework. Examples: open-ended activities that help students read, think, talk, write, and ask questions about the topic instead of those that simply test students on their content knowledge (see suggested activities in the family letter).
- If using EL Education's K–2 Reading Foundations Skills Block, consider sending home a copy of the student decodable reader used each week and encourage families to have students read these texts aloud to them.

Family Letter

Dear Family,

During Unit 2 of this module, your student will look at where and why people plant trees. By the end of the module, students will be able to participate in a discussion about the module guiding question: "How and why are trees important to us and our communities?" I am writing today to explain what your student will be learning, describe the activities that will support this learning, and suggest how to support this learning at home. I hope that you will plan to join us at the end of our deep study to celebrate all of your student's learning!

What will your student be learning?

Students will begin to study the topic with a focus on identifying places to plant trees and providing reasons to plant them. The learning will be focused on these ideas:

- There are many places and reasons to plant trees.
- Trees can provide nice things and help solve problems.
- It is important to provide reasons for your opinions.

Students will also practice these reading foundation skills:

- Identify and write the sound for most consonants and vowels
- Segment (break apart) the individual sounds of spoken, one-syllable words, and blend them back together
- Decode (read) and encode (write) regularly spelled, one-syllable words

How will your student be learning?

Throughout the unit, your student will read, think, listen, talk, write, and ask questions about the topic of where and why people plant trees. Students will participate in these activities, among others, to build their literacy skills:

- Listening to read-alouds about why trees are nice and how planting trees helped people in Kenya in a variety of texts. These include *A Tree Is Nice* and *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathi and the Trees of Kenya*.
- Singing a song about places trees are planted that also helps them learn about prepositions.
- Engaging in conversations with classmates
- Closely observing pictures of trees and/or trees in the community
- Writing and drawing in their Enjoying Trees journal, Part II

What can you do to support your student's learning at home?

Here are a few activities that you can do at home with your student to support his or her learning:

- Ask your student to talk with you about these questions: Where do people plant trees? Why do they plant trees? Where is a good place to plant a tree? What are your reasons for that opinion?
- Read books and sing songs about places trees are planted from home or the library.
- Observe and draw the trees in your community. Discuss with your student why it is nice or useful to have a tree there.
- Encourage your student to read the weekly Decodable Student Reader or a letter book to you every night.
- Practice reading and spelling regularly spelled, one-syllable words with the middle vowel sound /a/. For example: "pat," "chat," and "tap."

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss your student's learning.

Sincerely,

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